Get out your brooms Cavs fans ... we're going for a sweep on Monday in DC. The Cavs beat the Wizards 98-92 in game three of their first round playoff series, putting a cherry on top of what was a helluva day to be a Cleveland sports fan. Big Z had another big game, and John hits on that, Mike Brown's use of timeouts, and Princess Leia's gold bikini in The Good, The Bad, & The Summary.

THE SUMMARY:

Are you busy Monday night? Yes, I'm talking to you.

Reason I ask is that I need you, and three other guys, to take on the Cavs. I am convinced that:

1. Washington may not have any healthy players left by then; and
2. We may be able to hang with the Cavs into the fourth quarter before losing.

That's a very wordy way of saying that the Cavs play to the level of their competition. But as long as they keep winning, who cares?

The Cavs beat the Wizards, 98-92, and thus held up their end on The Greatest Day To Be A Cleveland Sports Fan In Quite Some Time (or TGDTBACSFIQST; as you can see, this is not your go-to column for snappy acronyms). The victory gave them a commanding 3-0 lead in their series with Washington.

You Know Who led the Cavs with 30 points, and as usual stuffed the rest of the stat sheet with six rebounds, nine assists, and a steal. Zydrunas Ilgauskas, the man who supposedly was past his useful life as a valuable player, added 24 points and eight boards. Antawn Jamison poured in 38 points to lead the Wizards, and Antonio Daniels posted 20 points and 13 assists.

Thanks to a 26-12 run to end the second quarter, keyed by a couple of James three-pointers, the Cavs built a 17 point lead (61-44) at the intermission. Apparently unwilling to risk the very real danger that Scot Pollard and Damon Jones would get garbage time, the Cavs then watched Washington score 21 of the next 25 points, completely erasing the lead. (In the Department of No Surprises, Jamison was the key to that run, as he scored 13 points during this stretch.)

The Wizards were able to tie the game two more times (at 79-79 and 81-81), but they never could push into the lead. Ilgauskas put the Cavs up for good with a pair of jumpers; and while Washington was within a three-pointer of tying the game within the final minute, they could never get any closer.

WHAT I LIKED ABOUT THE GAME:

2007, Not 2006: Last year, Z completely disappeared in the first round series against Washington. He was ineffective when he played, and had his minutes severely limited because of his ineffectiveness.

What a difference a year makes. Z had his third consecutive strong game in this series, with his 24 points (on 10-of-13 shooting) and eight boards. Here are a couple of plays that represent his impact on the game:

- With the Cavs leading 71-68 in the third quarter, Larry Hughes missed a runner from the right side of the lane. Z came from the left side, collared the rebound, and dunked it home.

- With the Cavs leading 91-86 with about three minutes to go, Z found himself with the ball past the top of the key, just inside the three-point line, with the shot clock about to expire. He shot the probably-a-bit-outside-his-range jumper. *Swish*.

Once Again: In Game 2, the Cavs crushed the Wizards in rebounding, 56-38.

In Game 3, the Cavs crushed the Wizards in rebounding, 48-33.

Shouldn't be too hard to guess who won both games, no?

42/48 Of LeBron: For most of the game, LeBron was masterful. Frankly, I'm about out of words to describe the guy. He can drive at will, and did so often against the Wizards. He can hit the outside shot, and did so often against the Wizards. He can find teammates and feed them with pinpoint passes, and did so often against the Wizards. Other than a brief stretch in which he fell in love with his outside shot (we'll get to that in a moment), he played a terrific game.

2/48 Of Sasha: Sasha Pavlovic had two very good minutes in the game: the final minute in

each half. In the second quarter, he got two dunks and a layup in the final minute. (The last of those, a dunk with one second remaining, came when the Wizards' Jamison fell asleep on defense; oh, what I would have given to see a blood pressure monitor on Wizards coach Eddie Jordan during those moments). In the final frame, he drilled a key three pointer from the right corner to give the Cavs a 96-90 lead. (The proper image here involves camels and straw.) Moments later, when Washington's Darius Songaila attempted a layup, Sasha swatted the ball away.

Sweet Play Of The Game: Cavs leading, 14-13, in the first quarter. Pavlovic bricks a jumper. Gooden grabs the rebound, then finds Pavlovic with a nifty pass. Sasha then makes an even niftier pass to Ilgauskas (in the lane) for a layup. *The court is the canvas, the ball the brush.*

Somewhere, Austin Carr Is Smiling: Cavs free throws attempted: 18. Cavs free throws made: 16. That's an 89% rate. And that's a big reason why the Cavs maintained their lead.

If Ira Newble Falls In The Woods And Nobody Hears It, Does He Make A Sound?: Newble received exactly seven seconds of playing time yesterday. Specifically, he played the last seven seconds of the first half, as Coach Mike Brown decided that he did not want to risk LeBron picking up his third foul before halftime. I believe that this may be a record for fewest time played in an NBA game. I am sure that some reader out there (hi Tom!) is already scouring the Web, doing the research that I am too lazy to do, in an effort to confirm/refute this apparent record.

It's Reader Mail Time!: Never before have I received as much reader feedback as I did for (*GRATUITOUS SELF-LINK ALERT*) my column on Game 2 , when I alluded to a skirmish between a couple of my neighbors at The Q. A large group of readers (which sounds more impressive than "all three of you") want to know exactly what happened. I'll try to describe the scene.

The gentleman two seats to my right, a man remarkably similar to Jabba the Hutt in appearance and temperament (I'm not kidding; the last time I saw a creature like this, Carrie Fisher was chained to him), took offense to the man in the row behind him brushing him (Jabba) as he returned to his seat. Understand, Jabba had been spreading nothing but sunshine all game, repeatedly yelling at the guy in front of him to sit down. (
Hello? It's a PLAYOFF GAME, you schmuck. If you want peace and quiet, stay home and watch it on TV.
)

Anyway, Jabba started mouthing off to the guy in the row behind him, as well as to his 12ish-year-old son. Guy In Row Behind Him (or GIRBH; see earlier comment re: acronyms) responded in kind. Here's a paraphrase of their conversation. (Because this is a family Web site – i.e., it has a wife and two little Web sites at home – I will replace some of the more offensive language. And because I sense our site has jumped the shark on the use of "spork" as an alternative … and also because I want to continue the Star Wars theme … I will replace any offensive words with the word " Wookiee ".)

JABBA: Wookiee you, you mother-Wookiee!

GIRBH: Wookiee you, you fat Wookiee!

JABBA: I'll kick your Wookiee, you Wookieeing Wookiee!

GIRBH: Lay a finger on me, and I'll sue your Wookiee, you Wookiee!

JABBA (pointing a hoof finger approximately 0.02 millimeters from GIRBH's nose): Don't Wookiee with me! I'll beat your Wookiee right here!

Et cetera. You get the idea. Nothing too outrageous, just a schoolyard-level fight between two men who (one would hope) would have known better.

ON SECOND THOUGHT: "Beat your Wookiee" sounds like it too needs a more family-friendly euphemism. Oh well, too late for that.

(*TRUE STORY: There is a Web site devoted to Princess Leia's gold lame bikini* .)

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT THE GAME:

Can't Anybody Here Coach This Game?: I like Coach Brown. Really, I do. He has brought a defensive mind-set to the team that they have never had before. He's bright, knows the game, and also knows that he does not know everything. He's personable and deft with the media. He owns potentially the largest collection of eyeglasses in America, and always matches them with his suits. I'm far from following my colleague's lead, which would have me suggest that GM Ferry kidnapped a platypus and fried it with shallots (although the search engines like it).

With that said, I would like to know what exactly was going through Coach Brown's mind during the third quarter. As described earlier, the Cavs played Penn and Teller, making a 17 point lead vanish. During this time, Coach Brown looked like a man completely unable to stop the course of events unfolding in front of him.

After Jamison hit a three-pointer, and then completed a three-point play on the next possession, Washington had sliced the lead to 11 points (63-52). Did Coach Brown call a time out? No.

After Washington's Jarvis Hayes drilled a three-pointer to further trim the lead, did Coach Brown call a time out? No.

After Etan Thomas made a way-too-easy layup, making the score 65-57, did Coach Brown call a time out? No.

Not until Jamison hit ANOTHER shot, cutting the lead to six points, did Coach Brown call a time out. The Cavs' offensive set coming out of that time out, you ask? You guessed it – the LeBron And Four Guys Waiting For A Bus play. LeBron dribbled on the right wing; the other four Cavaliers stood on the left, with little apparent interest in the game. *Dribble. Dribble. Dribble.* Four seconds remaining on the shot clock.
Heave
.
Clank.

Meow!
(as the cat took one in the ribs)

The Other 6/48 Of LeBron: For the first six minutes of the third quarter (which is when the

Cavs squandered their lead, you will note), James was content to launch long-range jumpers. He made one of four during this stretch; and that one had little business finding the bottom of the net. When LeBron looks to bomb away, the offense stagnates, and leads evaporate.

The Other 46/48 Of Sasha: It's a good thing that Sasha had those two good minutes. Based on his play in the other 46 minutes, he'd be writing a one-way ticket to Wesleyville. Aside from that one minute where he got three easy baskets, he shot a rim-bending 2-of-12 from the field, and he also added five turnovers (which led both teams).

His most ignominious stretch came in the fourth quarter, with the game hanging in the balance. With less than two minutes remaining, and the Cavs holding a seven point lead, Jamison pulled up for a three pointer. He missed it … but Pavlovic was called for fouling him on the arm (and rightly so). Needless to mention, Jamison sank all three freebies, making it a four point game.

On the Cavs' next possession, Sasha held the ball for a few seconds, then passed up a shot, finding Hughes with a nice pass in the corner. One problem: the shot clock had just expired. I'll sound like Some Announcer here, and say that you have to be aware of the shot clock. Pavlovic clearly did not know that the clock was about to run out, and it cost Cleveland the ball at what could have been a critical point. (After this stretch, Coach Brown practically threw Eric Snow into the game to substitute for Sasha.)

Now Introducing The General Manager Of The Cavs, Rodney Dangerfield: During the first quarter, after a time out, the TNT broadcast showed Cavs General Manager Danny Ferry watching the game from a seat in the lower bowl. As the announcers talked about Ferry, the camera showed Ferry being bumped from his seat by its (presumably) rightful owner. Geez, his dad was the GM of the team for years, and common courtesy would suggest giving him a seat that he can call his own … but noooo. Thanks, Washington! Should the series return to Cleveland, we'll make sure that your GM (Ernie Grunfeld) gets the finest seat that the Section 118 men's room has to offer.

WHAT LIES AHEAD:

It'll be Game 4 (and hopefully Game The Last) of the series on Monday night when the Cavs take on us … er, I mean the Wizards in Washington. Should the Cavs lose the game, the series will return to Cleveland for game 5 on Wednesday evening.